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SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED: IRAN'S FLAWED ELECTIONS

REF: STATE 192971

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Poloff delivered reftel demarche December 1 to Arnaud Pescheux, MFA desk officer for Iran. Pescheux agreed with our analysis of the circular nature of the Iranian system. He also agreed that the new Iranian elections would likely fail to meet international standards of fairness and openness. He was, however, hopeful that holding municipal elections simultaneously with the election for the Assembly of Experts would result in greater voter turn-out for the latter, which he thought might augur well for the "traditionalists" (i.e., Rafsanjani supporters).

12. (C) Saying that he was not authorized to make a commitment about whether France would publicly criticize the elections or share reporting from its diplomatic mission in Tehran with the USG, Pescheux noted that France thought it important to avoid the appearance of "punishing" Iran, lest the Iranians become even more intransigent on questions related to their nuclear program. To illustrate, Pescheux lamented the fact that, in response to international criticism of its human rights record, Iran had broken off its human rights dialogue with the EU. Poloff replied that, inasmuch as the EU's human rights dialogue with Iran had never produced any tangible results, its termination was perhaps not such a terrible loss.

13. (C) Post will promptly report any further substantive reaction.

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